

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

HACKETT, THOMAS PATTON.

INTERVIEW.

12106.

Field Worker's name Gomer Gower.

This report made on (date) November 13, 1937

1. Name Thomas Patton Hackett.

2. Post Office Address Spire, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Same.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 18 Year 1855.

5. Place of birth Sebastian County, Arkansas.

6. Name of Father Jeremiah Hackett. Place of birth Canada

Other information about father Major in Federal Army near Titchlon.

7. Name of Mother Sarah Jane Hackett. Place of birth Indian Territory

Other information about mother is reputedly the first white child

born in the Indian Territory. Family evicted for Cherokees.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 7.

Gomer Gower,
Interviewer.
11-13-37.

An Interview With Thomas Patton Hackett,
Spiro, Oklahoma.

Thomas Patton Hackett was born on October 18th, 1855,
about one mile south of Hackett, Arkansas, Indian Territory
line.

His father was Jeremiah Hackett, a major in the Federal
Army, born in Ohio, in 1818. He came to the state of
Arkansas and settled near Hickory Grove, a small village,
about one mile distant from what is now known as Hackett, a
village which took its name from its founder, Major Hackett
father of Thomas Patton Hackett.

His mother, Sarah Ann Hackett, nee Fitchnoi, is
believed to have/ first white child born in what later was
known as the Cherokee Nation.

At the time of Sarah Ann's birth, her parents resided
on Sallisaw Creek, near the present city of Sallisaw and
were forced to leave their home upon the arrival of the
first Cherokee immigrants. They then moved eastward into
the Territory of Arkansas and settled in the vicinity of
Fort Smith where Sarah Ann met and was married to Major
Jeremiah Hackett.

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In his youth, Thomas Patton Hackett attended school at Hickory Grove, Arkansas, near the eastern line of the then Indian Territory, and at Green Hill, a few miles distant, in the Choctaw Nation. These schools, both of which were located near the boundary line between the state of Arkansas and the Choctaw Nation, were attended by both white and Indian children.

He later attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and afterward the Depauw University at Greencastle, Indiana an institution which was formerly known as the Asberry University.

On April 23rd, 1885 he was married to Ida Fannin, the daughter of Doctor W. H. and Adeline Fannin. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Reverend Mr. John Smedley, a noted Methodist minister.

The young couple had one horse as their equipage to carry them from their home to the Green Hill church, where the ceremony was performed; the young man sat in the saddle and his bride rode behind, sideways.

In 1893, the couple moved to Scullyville, Indian Territory and Mr. Hackett engaged in the drug business. In the meantime Doctor Fannin was engaged in the practice of his profession.

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Soon after their removal to Scullyville, the Dawes Commission paid the village a call and their coming was the occasion of a vast gathering of people to hear the discussion of the purpose for which the Commission was created - the division of the land into Individual from Tribal ownership. This was a question upon which there was a great diversity of opinion, and one in which all the Choctaw citizens were vitally interested. Many good speeches were made both for and against such a division and the matter was fully discussed with the best of feeling and tolerance.

The doctor recalls hearing his father, Major Hackett, relate his experiences while he served as an officer at Fort Smith some time after the removal period and before the Civil War. At one time he was obliged to carry vast amounts of money in ox wagons from Fort Smith to Scullyville. This money was used for the payment of annuities in payment for accrued / improvements which the Choctaws had sold to the Federal Government in Mississippi and Alabama in accordance with treaty terms. The money, usually in gold, was placed in wooden kegs for transference to Scullyville. The road leading from Fort Smith to Scullyville crossed the Poteau

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River at a point where the water was quite deep. The depth of the water afforded an excellent opportunity for anyone so inclined to dump one or more of the kegs of treasure into the water where it would remain hidden until an opportune time to recover it. However, as may be surmised, these cargoes of treasure were accompanied by a guard whose business it was to see that they were safely delivered to the disbursing officer at Scullyville.

Upon the return of the Hackett family to their home at Hickory Grove, Arkansas, they found their fields all overgrown with brush; their stock, except one cow, one horse and one hog, all gone, while their log cabin home remained intact except that a large hole had been made in the roof. However, with hard work upon the part of all the family, the house and farm were quickly rehabilitated.

Of his reminiscences of that post-war period there is one of the unfortunate experience of one of his Choctaw friends, Jess Riddle, who had accumulated some money through the operation of a toll-gate on the old Fort Smith-Fort Towson road where it crossed Backbone Mountain. He took this money, approximating some two or three thousand dollars to Fort Smith and deposited it in the First National Bank,

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where a Mr. John Vail was cashier. He was not given a receipt or any other evidence showing that the money was deposited with the bank. Some years later he called at the bank for his money and was informed that it had no records showing that he had any money on deposit and the bank would not be responsible for his loss. The unfortunate and disgruntled old Indian pocketed his loss but became richer in his knowledge of the dark ways of the white man.

Another episode of that period concerns the ingenuity of another Choctaw friend and neighbor, John H. McClure in his effort to cope with the difficult problem of placating the State and Tribal authorities whose duty it was to enforce the liquor laws. John had excavated a large cellar immediately on the state and territory line with half of the cellar in the State of Arkansas and the other half in the Indian Territory, with a wooden partition separating the two halves. Upon a visit being made to the ingeniously constructed cellar by the State officers, the Arkansas half would invariably be found devoid of all traces of liquor, as old John would have it securely placed in the Territory half into which their jurisdiction, as State officers, did not extend. Upon a visit being made by the Territory officers, the

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process would be reversed and the Territory side of the cellar was found to be denuded of evidences of the presence of liquor. For a time, John's scheme worked to a nicety. But, the watchful and officious officers, charged with the responsible duty of bringing to the bar of justice all offenders of the outraged law, were not long to be thwarted in their purpose of out-smarting old John and catching him with the goods. At a conference between the State and Territory officials, it was arranged that both would swoop down on John and his cellar at the same time and thus assure the confiscation of the contraband liquor and the lawful arrest of the wily transgressor.

Not long after the close of the Civil War, Thomas Hackett's father, Major Hackett, formed a partnership with a Mr. George Brown and secured a Government contract to carry the mail from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Sherman, Texas, and another to carry the mail from Fort Smith, Arkansas to Fort Gibson. In connection with the mail contract they operated a stage line and transported passengers between these points. The stations between Fort Smith and Sherman were; Scullyville, Brazil, Council, Red Oak Mountain Station, Caley, Colbert and Denison. There was no robbery committed

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during their operation of this mail-passenger route.
However, the venture proved to be unprofitable and it
was finally discontinued.